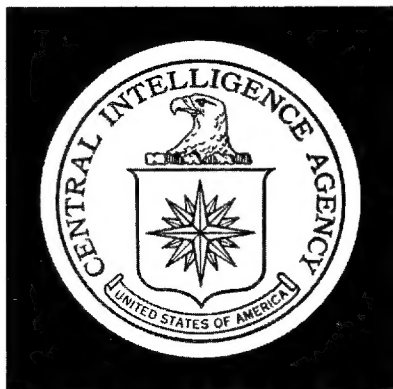
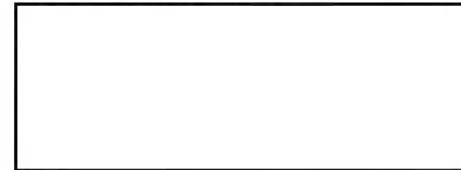


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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Information as 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
The 25 allied battalions of Operation JUNCTION CITY have met only light resistance so far in sweeping the Viet Cong stronghold of War Zone "C" (Paras. 1-3). US Marines reported three separate contacts on 23 February with enemy forces in southeastern Quang Ngai Province (Para. 4). The Viet Cong in the central highlands are apparently increasing their demands for food from the local populace (Paras. 5-7). Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics (Para. 8).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
In deciding upon the division of responsibilities within the future executive branch, the Constituent Assembly in the draft constitution continues to give favor to the elected president compared with the appointed prime minister (Para. 1). A recently captured Viet Cong directive analyzes Vietnamese Buddhist organizations and assigns priority targets to Viet Cong cadre (Paras. 2-4). A new strike threat together with scheduled employee cutbacks indicate that the labor situation will remain unsettled (Paras. 5-6). Two former premiers recently outlined their plans for an active course of political action (Paras. 7-9).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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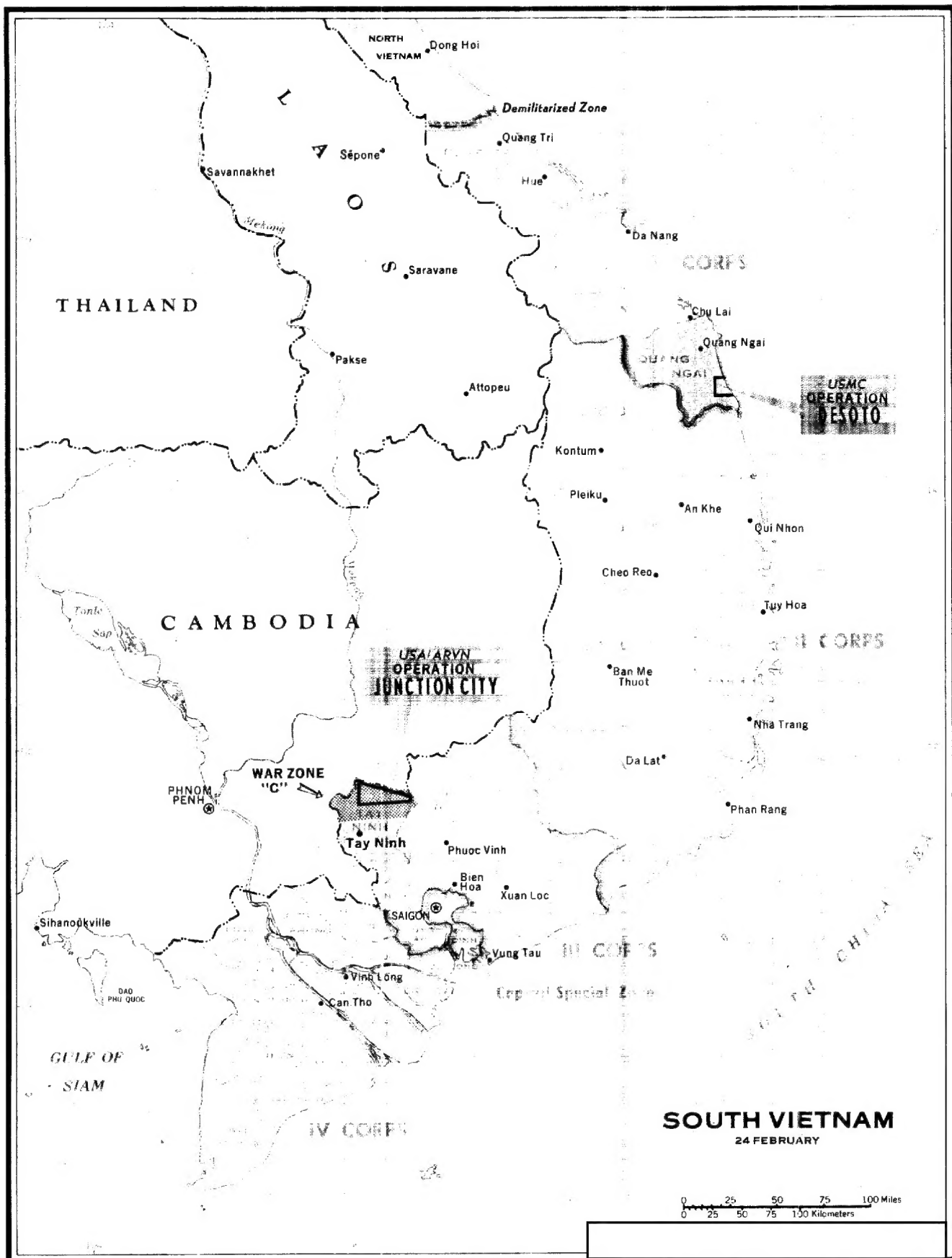
NOTE: The graphics on South Vietnam
Battle Statistics will appear
next week.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The US - South Vietnamese offensive against the Communists' War Zone "C" in northern Tay Ninh Province has continued to meet only light and scattered enemy resistance. Elements of the 25-battalion (23 US, 2 ARVN) search-and-destroy Operation JUNCTION CITY have been sweeping the heavy jungle and scrub land of the operational area in search of enemy forces and installations since 21 February. The allies report only light casualties, ten killed and 40 wounded. Enemy losses have also been light with 19 having been killed thus far.

2. Early on 24 February, 20 rounds of mortar were fired at a US field position about 20 miles north of Tay Ninh city. Three Americans were killed and 27 wounded. Farther north, a US patrol located an enemy base camp 30 miles from Tay Ninh city. Quantities of communication equipment, small arms, and ammunition were found in the camp.

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Quang Ngai Operations

4. At least ten Communist soldiers were killed as the result of three separate encounters on 23 February between enemy forces and elements of the US Marine Operation DESOTO in the coastal flatlands of southeastern Quang Ngai Province. Heavy artillery and several tactical air strikes supported the American forces. American casualties were two killed and nine wounded for these engagements. This one-battalion search-and-destroy operation is sweeping the coastal flatlands of southern Quang Ngai in search of units of the 1st and 2nd North Vietnamese regiments. Since this operation began, 190 enemy soldiers have been killed compared with American casualties of 30 killed and 289 wounded.

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Popular Resistance to Viet Cong Rice Collection in
The Highlands

5. There have been repeated indications recently that the Viet Cong in the central highlands are increasing their demands for rice donations from the local populace and that these demands are meeting with resistance.

6.

[redacted] the Viet Cong in Pleiku Province revealed at a meeting on 8 January 1967 that food requirements for North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units in the area had fallen short because allied air strikes had interdicted supply lines. Instructions were issued at the meeting to increase local rice collection. Viet Cong attempts to collect rice in Pleiku and other areas of the highlands, however, have been unsuccessful in many instances [redacted]

Village inhabitants have several times refused the demands of roving Viet Cong bands, despite occasional threats of kidnaping.

7. Such reports are fragmentary and may not be indicative of widespread opposition to the Viet Cong among the population in the highlands. Any great increase of food requisitions by the Viet Cong could, however, spark resistance. Production of food, especially rice, in the highlands has always been well below the levels of other areas of the country. Prior to the infiltration of NVA units, the Viet Cong in the highlands relied on their own production efforts plus occasional "contributions" from the local people and some shipments from other areas. It was not until early 1965 that an organized agricultural tax collection system was established. Apparently there was little effective opposition from the population to this tax collection, but any additional increase in demands for rice in an area where production is already low could cause a strong reaction.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

8. The week of 12-18 February as compared with the week of 5-11 February.

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>
5-11 Feb	42	0	0
12-18 Feb	28	0	1

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>
5-11 Feb	3	17	29
12-18 Feb	2	7	20

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Harass-ment</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
5-11 Feb	383	447	962
12-18 Feb	208	332	624

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>
Killed	1,085	2,032	193	110
Wounded	-----	-----	423	486
Missing/ Captured	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>33</u>
TOTALS	1,085	2,032	669	629

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	US		FREE WORLD	
	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>
Killed	107	171	9	40
Wounded	1,015	800	33	76
Missing/ Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,122	971	42	116

III. Weapons Captured

	VC/NVA		GVN	
	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>	<u>5-11 Feb</u>	<u>12-18 Feb</u>
Individual	337	Not	186	58
Crew-Served	<u>36</u>	Reported	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTALS	373		196	59

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In its 22 February session, the Constituent Assembly in its draft constitution continued to give the future elected president maximum responsibility in the executive branch as compared with the appointed prime minister. For example, the assembly decided to delete from its working draft a provision which would have required both the prime minister and the cabinet minister or secretary concerned to countersign decisions of the president. Among other items considered on 22 February, the assembly also passed a general provision calling for the establishment of a national security council to be headed by the president. The organization and procedures of the council, however, are to be delineated by future legislation.

Viet Cong Attitude Toward the Buddhists

2. A recently captured directive from COSVN, the Viet Cong central headquarters, outlined Viet Cong strategy toward Buddhist groups in South Vietnam. This document, dated 7 November 1966, identified three distinct factions in the Buddhist hierarchy: a "reactionary" group headed by Thich Tam Chau, who is Buddhist Institute chairman and relatively progovernment; a "progressive" group led by militant Thich Thien Hoa; and a third group probably led by Thich Ho Giac, but not described further. According to the document, the immediate task of the Viet Cong is to "bring down" Tam Chau and to sympathize with the "progressive" group. The directive called for Viet Cong cadre to infiltrate Buddhist groups and movements, but at the same time not to disturb the "legal" status of the Buddhist leaders themselves.

3. The document described the militant, antigovernment monk Tri Quang as the leader of a separate faction within Tam Chau's "reactionary" group. According to the document, Quang was once strongly anti-Communist, but recently had shown signs of becoming more "progressive." Nevertheless, Viet Cong were instructed by the directive to attempt to destroy the prestige of Tri Quang and to expose him as a "tool" of the US, after they had dealt with Tam Chau.

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4. As yet, there has been no field comment on the authenticity of the document, nor an indication of any specific addressees. From the analysis of Buddhist groups, it is possible that the Viet Cong were only considering Buddhist organizations within Saigon itself, rather than nationwide. That Tam Chau was named as the primary target for the Viet Cong to discredit is not surprising, since Communist propaganda has been directed against him openly for some time. The Viet Cong attitude toward Tri Quang has in the past, however, been somewhat of an enigma. It may well be significant that they have separated him from other "progressive" Buddhists, and apparently have earmarked him as a future target.

Labor Situation Remains Unsettled

5. With the recent settling of one strike by some 3,000 Vietnamese workers at a construction site near Long Binh, the US Embassy now reports that another strike is imminent, and that it may be nationwide. Officials of the Electric Power Company Union, which is affiliated with the country's largest labor organization, believe that the possible transfer of two union officials by a government-owned company from Saigon to central Vietnam is a threat to the union's existence. A meeting between union officials and the government's public works minister is scheduled for 25 February, and the union president has declared that if the transfers are not canceled, the union will strike, possibly on 25 February.

6. Meanwhile, the scheduled employee cutbacks by the American RMK-BRJ construction combine may result in at least temporary unemployment for up to 11,000 Vietnamese workers. The US Embassy has reported that all efforts will be made to avoid serious dislocations, but the chances are that some friction will develop before the reduced force level is reached.

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New Political Grouping to Participate in Forthcoming Elections

7. Two former premiers, Phan Huy Quat and Tran Van Tuyen, recently added their voices to those of several other prominent politicians who think that a military candidate will surely win the future presidential election. In a conversation with a US Embassy officer on 20 February, neither Quat nor Tuyen cared to predict whether Thieu or Ky would be the military candidate, but felt that one or the other would be elected.

8. Tran Van Tuyen then went on to say that he, Quat, Dang Van Sung, and others were in the process of establishing a political front based on existing political groups. The front, which would be the first step toward a meaningful national party, would participate in national assembly elections. It would also back a presidential candidate, but even if the candidate did not win, Tuyen hoped to win enough seats in the assembly to constitute a healthy opposition.

9. Neither Quat nor Tuyen supplied details as to the composition of the front or named the presidential candidate they would support. Tuyen, however, did say it was quite possible that they might back the military candidate. Both Quat and Tuyen strongly favor holding concurrent presidential and assembly elections, arguing that if assembly elections were held later, the president would be able to block the election of most "opposition" candidates.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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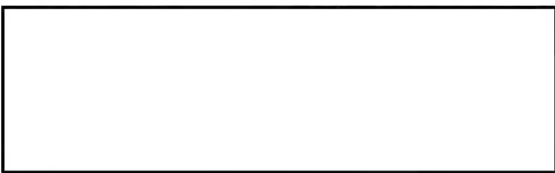
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